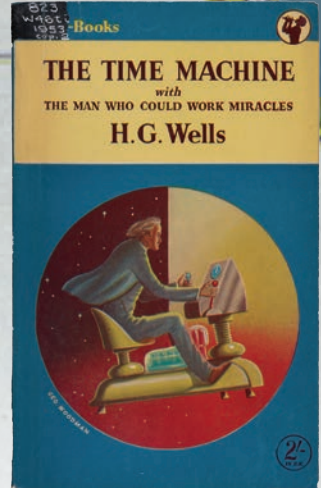


Item 7, detail from title page.



Item 9.

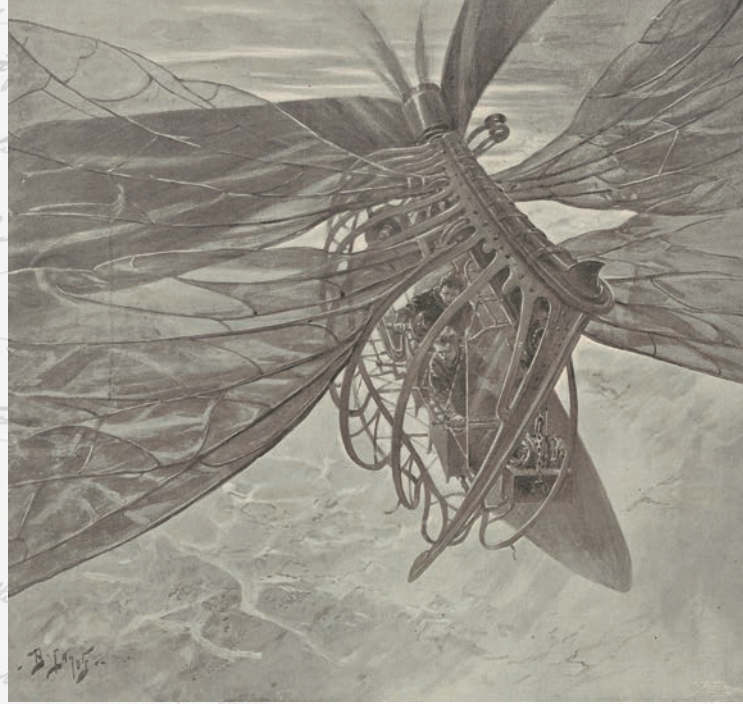


## H.G. Wells Time Traveler

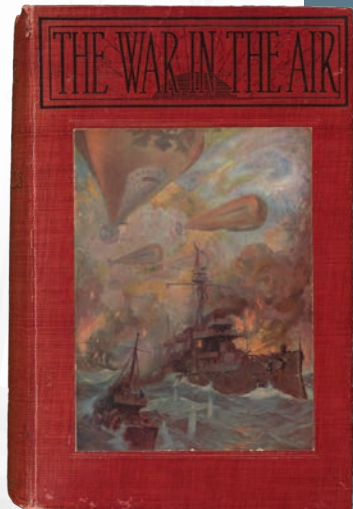
No writer is more renowned for his ability to anticipate the future than H. G. Wells. His writing foresaw the aeroplane, the tank, space travel, the atomic bomb, and the worldwide web; his fantastic fiction imagined time travel, flights to the moon, alien invasion, and human beings with the powers of gods. Wells is one of the most influential writers in the English language. In the years between the wars he reached millions of readers worldwide with *The Outline of History*, which told the story of humanity from its evolutionary origins to the utopian World State he hoped would be the outcome of his prophecies, and broadcast his message to cinema audiences in *Things to Come*. His major scientific romances *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds* have never been out of print. Hailed as a genius from his debut in print, he has helped shape the imagination of a range of writers from George Orwell to Jorge Luis Borges to every science fiction writer who has come after him.



Item 11.



Item 18, detail from illustration.



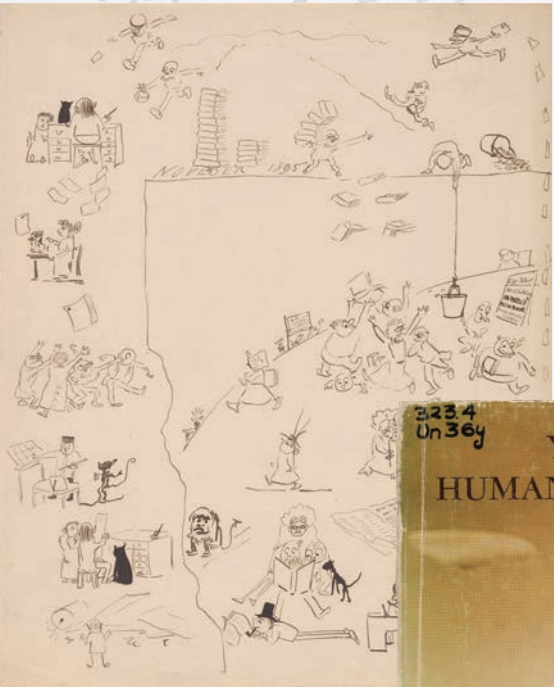
Item 16.

Yet for all his success, Wells died with unfulfilled ambitions: asked, late in life, what he wanted for his epitaph, he chose the words, 'I told you so. You *damned* fools.' Even more than literary success, what Wells wanted was to teach his readership – indeed his first two books, preceding *The Time Machine* by two years, were textbooks, *Honours Physiography* and *Text-Book of Biology*. Later in his career, he disavowed the term 'artist' for his declared vocation, preferring 'journalist.' Wells did not merely want his creations to be aesthetically successful but to make a difference to life as it is really lived. On this issue, Wells explosively fell out with Henry James. Tiring of the older writer's patronizing comments on his work, Wells cruelly lampooned him in his 1915 novel *Boon*. In his 1934 *Autobiography*, Wells remembers the disagreement thus:

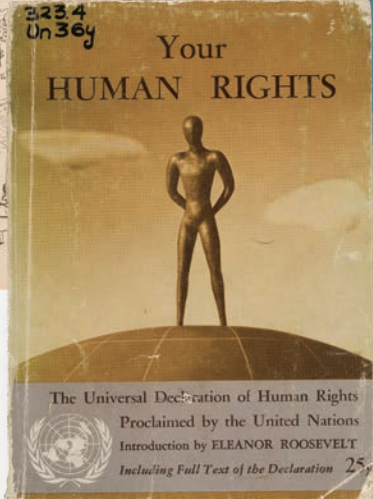
*One could not be in a room with him for ten minutes without realizing the importance he attached to the dignity of this art of his. But I was disposed to regard a novel as about as much an art form as a marketplace or a boulevard. You went by it on your various occasions.*

While literature students are taught now to be suspicious of texts which have a palpable design upon their reader, Wells's aims for fiction to be useful are, in their way, more ambitious than James's for the novel to be beautiful. In his essay 'The Contemporary Novel,' Wells called for the novel

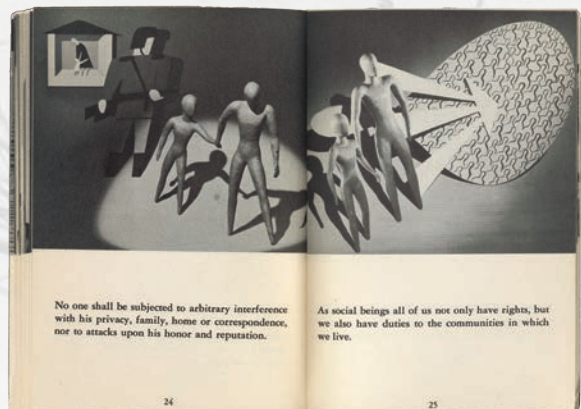
*to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and the exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas.*



Item 4.



Item 29.

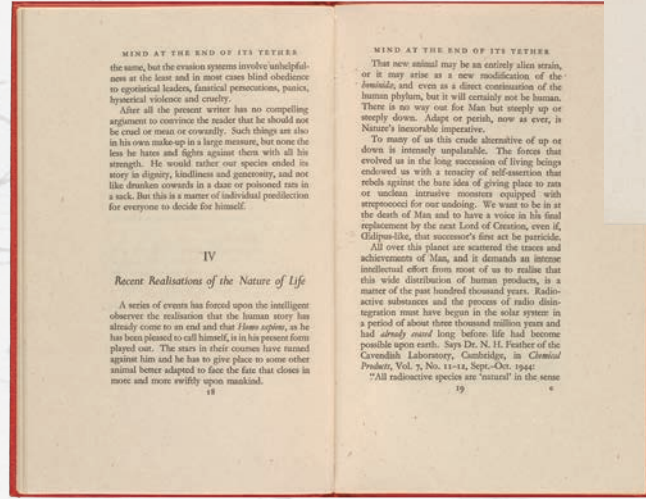


Item 29, detail.

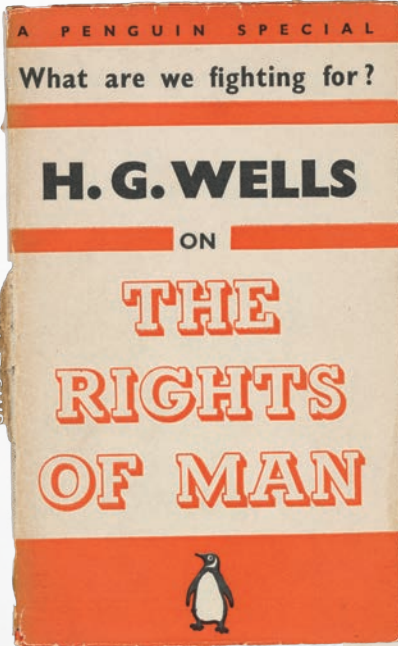
Wells's key intellectual influences were Darwin and Plato. If correctly educated human beings, liberated by the possibilities of future technology, can organize culture and politics in the best possible way, then a modern Republic might be possible. For Wells it was crucial for everyone to be taught about humankind's shared evolutionary origin, and for outmoded ideas of national sovereignty to be put aside in favor of building a utopian World State. If, however, humanity persisted with inadequate education, economic inequality, and nation states going to war against each other, then the future he predicts for *homo sapiens* is a bleak one. The Time Traveler journeys to the year 802,701 and witnesses humanity having degenerated into the subspecies of the effete Eloi and the apelike Morlocks; traveling further into the future, he sees that all animal life on Earth has become extinct and no trace of us remains. 'Human history,' he wrote in the *Outline*, 'becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.'

Having seen his dreams of a co-operative world community thwarted not once but twice by catastrophic World Wars, in the 1940s Wells turned to ensuring human rights and freedom at the level of the individual. Letters that Wells wrote to the *Times* newspaper led to the Sankey Committee for Human Rights, and the influence of Wells's 1942 pamphlet *The Rights of Man; Or What Are We Fighting For?* can be seen in the United Nations 1948 Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Passionate to the last for the lot of future generations to be better, Wells appeals for international laws that will guarantee the right to life, education, work, trade, and property for every man and woman on Earth. Wells's vision has passed into law but not yet into reality: this twentieth-century prophet clearly has lessons from which the twenty-first century can still learn.

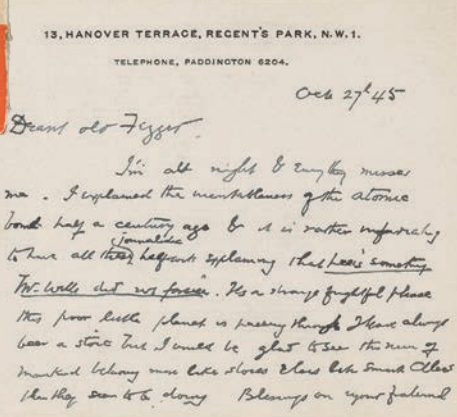
Simon J. James  
Durham University



Item 28.



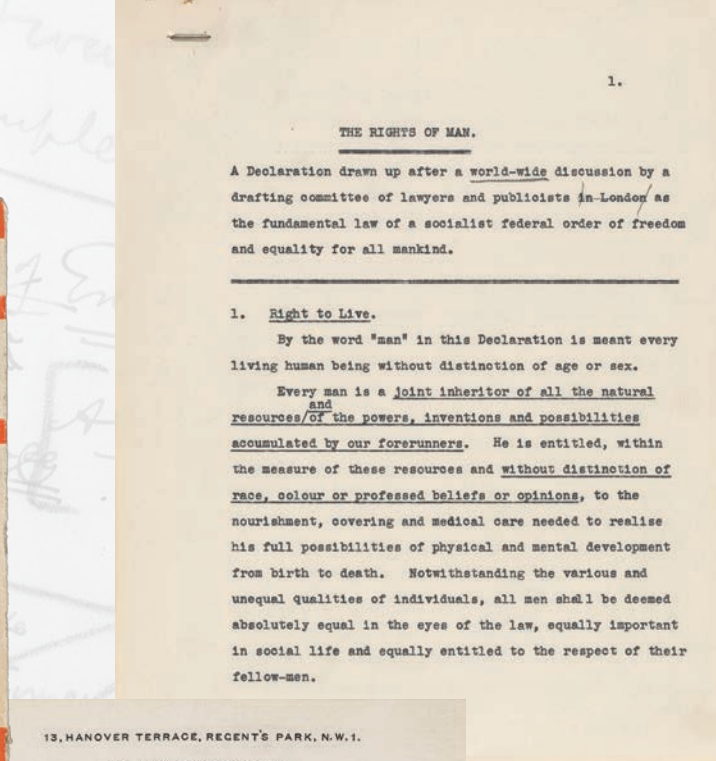
Item 27.



Item 23.



Item 24.



Item 26.